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## Journal Abstracts

The following abstracts are reprinted verbatim as they appear in the cited source.

**Neumark-Sztainer, D., Story, M., Perry, C., and Casey, M.A. 1999. Factors influencing food choices of adolescents: Findings from focus-group discussions with adolescents. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association* 99(8):929-934, 937.**

This snapshot of adolescent attitudes toward food and eating behavior reveals that this age group's food choices are shaped by a variety of interrelated factors, ranging from basic hunger and food cravings to complex social influences such as family meal habits or time-crunched lifestyles. Comments collected from 141 boys and girls in grades 7 and 10 identified factors such as a food's flavor, smell, and appearance; time available for preparing and eating meals; parental attitudes and behaviors regarding food and eating; and the eating environment (eg, whether eating with friends vs family members) as key influences on a young person's food choices. Major barriers to eating more fruits, vegetables, and dairy foods and fewer high-fat foods were a lack of a sense of urgency regarding personal health in relation to other concerns and taste preferences for other foods. Successful teen-focused interventions must aim to make healthful foods taste and look more appealing, limit unhealthful food options, engage parents to teach healthful eating habits when children are young, and shape social norms to make it "cool" to eat healthfully.

**Firestone, J.M., Harris, R.J., and Lambert, L.C. 1999. Gender role ideology and the gender based differences in earnings. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues* 20(2):191-215.**

Much of the research on gender differences in occupational earnings still focuses on human capital and the structure of the labor market. However, these variables rarely explain even half of the gender gap in earnings. Most research has examined the impact of gender role ideology as it impacts occupational choice, which indirectly can impact earnings. Using data from the National Opinion Research Center General Social Surveys, this research focuses on the relationship between attitudes about gender roles and two variables: (a) earnings, and (b) occupational positions held by women and men. Findings show that traditional gender-role ideology contributes to lower observed earnings for *both* males and females, independent of the influences of human capital characteristics, occupational context, and ascribed characteristics. Results support socialization as a partial explanation for the gender-based earnings differences and suggest that, to the extent that economic rewards are used to assess the value of gender role expectations, traditional gender role attitudes might continue to change and lead to relatively equal earnings among women and men.

**Allison, D.B., Zannolli, R., and Narayan, K.M.V. 1999. The direct health care costs of obesity in the United States. *American Journal of Public Health* 89(8):1194-1199.**

*Objectives.* Recent estimates suggest that obesity accounts for 5.7% of US total direct health care costs, but these estimates have not accounted for the increased death rate among obese people. This article examines whether the estimated direct health care costs attributable to obesity are offset by the increased mortality rate among obese individuals.

*Methods.* Data on death rates, relative risks of death with obesity, and health care costs at different ages were used to estimate direct health care costs of obesity from 20 to 85 years of age with and without accounting for increased death rates associated with obesity. Sensitivity analyses used different values of relative risk of death, given obesity, and allowed the relative costs due to obesity per unit of time to vary with age.

*Results.* Direct health care costs from 20 to 85 years of age were estimated to be approximately 25% lower when differential mortality was taken into account. Sensitivity analyses suggested that direct health care costs of obesity are unlikely to exceed 4.32% or to be lower than 0.89%.

*Conclusions.* Increased mortality among obese people should be accounted for in order not to overestimate health care costs.

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**Hampl, J.S. and Betts, N.M. 1999. Cigarette use during adolescence: Effects on nutritional status. *Nutrition Reviews* 57(7):215-221.**

Despite numerous anti-tobacco campaigns, smoking among adolescents continues to be a predominant public health issue. This report details the interrelationships between adolescence, smoking, and nutrition and health. Current data indicate that most smokers become nicotine-dependent as adolescents, which places them at risk for chronic diseases associated with continuous oxidative damage. Additionally, nicotine has antidepressant and hypermetabolic effects, which may be of particular importance during adolescence because nicotine use leads to increased dependence on tobacco, contributes to difficulty in smoking cessation, and promotes weight gain following smoking cessation.

**Bianchi, S.M., Subaiya, L., and Kahn, J.R. 1999. The gender gap in the economic well-being of non-resident fathers and custodial mothers. *Demography* 36(2):195-203.**

Using a unique sample of couples with children, we estimate the gender gap in economic well-being after marital separation, something that previous studies of individuals who divorce have not been able to do. The income-to-needs levels of formerly married mothers are only 56% [of] those of their former husbands. The postseparation gender gap is reduced if the wife was employed full-time and was an above-average earner before marital disruption. The gap is also relatively small among the least economically independent wives, those who were not employed before separation. For the latter group, the husband's relatively low income tends to reduce the gender gap.

**Keenan, D.P., Abusabha, R., Sigman-Grant, M., Achterberg, C., and Ruffing, J. 1999. Factors perceived to influence dietary fat reduction behaviors. *Journal of Nutrition Education* 31(3):134-144.**

Dietary change is an inherently complex process. Although dietary fat reduction is an important issue in nutrition education, factors facilitating this type of change have not been fully examined. By accumulating information from individuals who have already been successful in initiating and maintaining dietary fat reduction, practical means of assisting others can be learned. This study collected information from 155 participants between the ages of 30 and 55. Participants were included if they reported the initiation of sustained dietary fat reduction strategies beginning at least 5 years prior to recruitment. Data used to examine individual patterns of dietary fat reduction were collected via in-depth, semistructured, retrospective interviews. Qualitative analyses identified 134 factors that played a role in facilitating the adoption of multiple fat reduction strategies. The factors identified were further classified into two categories: unplanned and planned. Unplanned factors were defined as life events or occurrences that are not nor should they be intentionally included in one's life as a means of dietary improvement (e.g., market influence, health issues, disease diagnosis). Planned factors were defined as occurrences often intentionally included in one's life to facilitate dietary change (e.g., going on a weight loss diet, acquiring an appliance, making a resolution). They frequently resulted from mediation by an unplanned factor. These factors can be used to help nutrition educators identify specific times conducive to initiating dietary change, as well as techniques for facilitating dietary fat reduction.

**Ono, H. 1998. Husbands' and wives' resources and marital dissolution. *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 60:674-689.**

Prominent theories converge in suggesting that a wife's resources are positively related to marital dissolution (i.e., the wife's independence hypothesis), whereas a husband's resources are inversely related to dissolution (i.e., the husband's income hypothesis). Using data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (1968-1985), a discrete-time event history analysis identifies modifications required of both hypotheses. First, wife's earnings have a nonlinear, U-shaped relationship to the risk of marital dissolution. Second, the impact of husband's earnings varies as a function of wife's earnings. In particular, when the wife has no earnings, lower husband's earnings have a disruptive effect on the marriage. By contrast, when the wife has earnings, lower husband's earnings have a non-significant impact on marital dissolution. Finally, results fail to support the hypothesis that better economic prospects for a wife, measured by education and time worked, increase the risk of marital dissolution separately from her actual economic standing, measured by her earnings.